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THERE IS POWER IN YOUR MIND

A Series of Four Lessons Devoted to:

I. PRINCIPALS OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING

III. DEVELOPING CREATIVE ABILITY

II. DEVELOPING MENTAL STRENGTH

IV. DEVELOPING MENTAL HEALTH



LESSON IV.

Mayan Revelation Number 282

DEVELOPING MENTAL HEALTH

Factors that Cause Mental Sickness

Destructive Attitudes of Personality

Steps to Mental Health

Beloved Perfector:

This is the fourth Lesson in the series: THERE IS POWER IN YOUR MIND. This study is designed to help you to understand the nature of mental health. We shall look closely at certain attitudes that sometimes eventuate in mental sickness. We are not interested in serious disturbances of the mind, but rather in the common threats to mental stability that confront us in our daily lives. In the concluding section we shall consider the available methods that strengthen the mind in the struggle for completeness.

Mental illness differs from physical illness in many respects. The symptoms are often illusive and difficult to recognize. Clinical tests will reveal any abnormality in the heart movement, but no such physical tests will indicate the inner tensions that give rise to fear. Often we are not aware that our mental condition is less than perfect. We cover our weaknesses, or we attribute them to a physical difficulty. Furthermore, even when we are aware that something

is wrong, we frequently refuse to face the real situation. It is a serious matter when we avoid the implications of a physical symptom, but it is no less serious when we ignore the mental weaknesses that may affect both physical and mental health.

When you go to a hospital, or a clinic, or a physician's office for a physical check-up you undergo certain examinations and tests that determine whether you are a healthy individual. These include a check on your weight, blood pressure, eyes, ears, throat and other parts of your body. Usually a cardiogram is used to indicate the condition of your heart. These tests are frequently supplemented by x-rays. Technicians analyze various elements to determine whether any foreign substances pose a threat to your health. This approach is well defined and generally accepted. The examination enables the physician to inform you as to whether you are in good health, and to recommend certain measures for correcting any weakness that is unearthed.

A mental check-up is more difficult. The techniques are not so well defined. At certain points physical and mental examinations coincide. The doctor who examines your physical health will inquire concerning your habits of sleep and the functioning of your digestive system. The consideration of mental health requires similar questions. Lack of sleep or malfunctioning of the digestive system may have their source in mental attitudes as well as in physical symptoms. But the mental check-up requires that we answer numerous other questions. The physician or counsellor will find it necessary to consider your worries and your fears, and your attitude toward people, whether aggressive or retiring. He will want to know about your work - whether you enjoy it, or whether it is a burden. While admitting that the term "happiness" is relative and indefinite, he may ask whether or not you are happy. These questions will help to give the specialist a picture of your mental state.

As we begin this Lesson you may want to give yourself a mental examination. Consider earnestly and sincerely the following questions. They are worded in such a manner that you can answer with an affirmative or a negative. Take time to weigh each question individually, then respond with a "yes" or a "no".

1. Do I sleep well each night? _____
2. Am I free of oppressive fears? _____
3. Am I happy? _____
4. Do I get along well with people? _____
5. Do I enjoy my work? _____
6. Do I avoid unnecessary worry? _____
7. Am I free of hatred and bitterness? _____
8. Do I enjoy normal social contacts with neighbors and friends? _____
9. Do I accept responsibility for my failures? _____
10. Am I willing to yield frequently to the desires and wishes of others? _____

If you have answered eight of these questions affirmatively you have reason to feel confident that you are in fair to excellent mental health. Even if you have answered less than eight of the questions affirmatively it is not an indication that you are mentally ill. It does suggest, however, that there is potential danger in your mental attitudes. It indicates that your mental health is less than perfect.

With this study as a background we will proceed to a consideration of certain causes of mental stress, and then look at the ways by which you can gain new strength and poise in your mental life. Earnestly pray:

PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, help me to be honest in facing not only Thee, but myself. Give me courage to confront my weaknesses, and to deal with them. Let Thy power and Thy presence fill my life that I may become the person Thou hast intended me to be. Enable me to walk in those pathways which make for both physical and mental health. In Jesus' name. Amen.



FACTORS THAT CAUSE MENTAL SICKNESS

If we are to understand and control our mental attitudes it is necessary for us to understand our unconscious selves. Like a huge iceberg, one-eighth of our mental process functions below the surface of our consciousness. Many psychologists refer to this part of our nature as "the unconscious self." It is made up of all the inheritances of the ages, and of experiences - usually from infancy and childhood - which are hidden and forgotten. It is an amazing fact that nothing we learn or experience is completely wiped away. These elements and experiences are buried in our subconscious.

It should be evident that the influence of the subconscious is often creative and helpful. The late Dr. Carl Jung, one of the outstanding psychoanalysts of this century, believed that the action of the heart, and all major bodily functions, are controlled through the unconscious. The human race has trained the unconscious to do its work through millions of years of experience. The conscious mind no longer bothers with the beat of the heart or the flow of the blood stream, except when we fear that there may be abnormal functioning. Only when we attempt to interfere with these essential necessities for life, or worry about them, do we face difficulties. If we allow the subconscious to do its work unheeded and unimpeded we have fewer physical difficulties.

The subconscious mind helps us in numerous ways. You will recall moments when you were unable to remember a name. You were embarrassed by the lapse in your memory. Later, when you were relaxed, the name came suddenly into your mind out of the subconscious. This is but one indication of countless experiences when the subconscious recalls recollections the conscious mind had totally forgotten.

Moreover, the subconscious often encourages our creative impulses. Many have related experiences in which they awakened from sound sleep with ideas for a poem that became immortal. The late Edwin Markham declared that his "The Man With the Hoe" was a product entirely of his subconscious mind.

Many people in the business world report that their most fruitful and creative ideas have come to them when they were totally relaxed, and not thinking of the problem at hand. The ideas had their source in the subconscious.

Yet the subconscious may also be a constant threat to mental health. Many of our fears and prejudices are a product of experiences in childhood that are buried in the subconscious. They are often the source of our hesitation or refusal to accept the power we need. The block that keeps you from being victorious may have its source in these hidden factors. Most of our so-called complexes - lack of friendliness, hatred, suspicion, and jealousy - have their origin in the subconscious.

The hope that we can control these constant menaces to our happiness depends upon whether we are willing to deepen our knowledge and understanding. We must be prepared to confront realistically any situation that causes us to be withdrawn or fearful. The science of psychoanalysis depends almost entirely upon the principle that we can dig out of the inner recesses of the mind the forgotten memories of incidents that left their mark upon our lives. It is seldom possible for us by ourselves to do the digging that is involved in psychoanalysis, but we can realistically face a situation in which our weaknesses are apparent and, by a wise use of memory, search for the explanation of why we act as we do. We will not always be successful, but we will sometimes find the key that unlocks the door behind which the dark shadows are hiding.

The second factor that contributes to a lack of mental stability is closely related to the subconscious self, but is not identical with it. It can best be described as the result of inner conflicts within the mind. We face strain and stress because our conscience is often at war with our inherited impulses. All of us are products of the countless generations in which desires to satisfy the needs of the self were the driving force to shape thought and action. We are born with a natural tendency to be selfish and combative. We tend to insist constantly on having our own way. You have observed how a baby will sometimes turn red with anger if it is not fed. More than hunger is involved, though that may be a factor. The major fact is that the baby wants its own way. A wise mother endeavors to anticipate the needs of her child, and to avoid the outbursts that suggest temper, but the basic urge to get what it wants controls the baby's actions until they are tempered, - first by love, and then by the awareness of the necessity to give consideration to the rights of others.

The developing personality accepts responsibilities that become a part of the conscience. We learn what is right and good. As we gain spiritual insights into the nature of God, and accept the obligation to honor His laws, our conscience is broadened. A larger conscience is, of necessity, confronted with larger possibilities of inner conflict as the natural self demands those satisfactions that the conscience indicates it ought not to have.

This vast area of inner conflict has to be faced and dealt with if we are to avoid mental sickness. Much of mental illness that requires hospitalization

stems from the severity of the inner conflict between our conscience and the pressing desires of our bodies and minds. For every patient in a mental institution who reflects these inner conflicts, there are thousands who are under par-
mentally because they have refused to face the endless struggle that goes on be-
tween the conscience and selfish desires.

Recognize these two universal factors that contribute to mental sickness. Don't run away from them, or push them out of your mind. A willingness on your part to face them, and to deal with them, may be the key which you need to give you poise and power for daily living.

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DESTRUCTIVE ATTITUDES OF PERSONALITY

Now we turn to an examination of specific attitudes of personality that tend to adversely affect our mental health and stability. You may ask why these attributes have a negative and destructive influence upon mental health. The answer goes deeper than the current tendency to put the blame on Puritan ethics. Some contemporary psychologists declare that the restraints of civilization are the primary cause of mental illness. They foolishly assert that individuals would face no mental stress and strain if they could have complete self-expression. But the awareness of right and wrong goes deeper in the human race than any historical code of ethics. It is grounded in the basic fact that man is different than the animals. Furthermore, not one of us can do what we want to do on every occasion because we are in relationship with people who also have their preferences and desires. Wherever there are even two people in social relations there must be a willingness on the part of each one to submerge his personal desires to the welfare of the other. Complete self-expression is an impossibility in any society. Even if one were to live alone on a desert island he would have to surrender his personal wishes to the conditions of nature as they changed from day to day.

It is reasonable, then, to consider the attitudes that contribute to men-
tal strain and instability. They are factors that must be dealt with by any
individual who seeks maturity and health of mind.

The first of these is selfishness. No definition of selfishness should be necessary. We know that it involves a consuming desire to have our own way in every situation. None of us likes to face the fact that we are selfish. We prefer to believe that others are selfish, while we are wise and prudent. Perhaps a better term is that of "self-centeredness". We consider first what will please or satisfy us, or what will add to our comfort. The biological urge is evident in the kind of "self-centeredness" that becomes broad enough to include our family. The history of mankind records the fact that a father or mother will often fight as energetically for the welfare and rights of his or her child as for himself or herself. While this is commendable, still the slightly broader interpretation of selfishness does not enable us to avoid the dangers that this attitude poses for the mind.

Selfishness involves a turning inward upon the self. A visit to any men-
tal hospital indicates that mental illness usually involves being engrossed with
the self and a total rejection of the people and the needs of the world outside.
Absorption with the self and its interests constitutes a threat to mental stability

and inevitability leads to mental sickness. No mind can be healthy if it rejects both the rights and the needs of others.

The second of these qualities is a frantic desire to succeed. Often it is accompanied by a ruthless disregard of the rights of others. Victims of such an illness seek to escape the consequences of their failures by using stimulants. They refuse to abide by ethical and moral standards. They are willing to pay any price to gain what they think of as success.

It is important to recognize, however, that it is not always a sign of illness when one has a driving desire to produce or to gain advancement. Many men and women who receive honors in their chosen field do so because they possess a determination to reach their desired goals. They willingly face hardships in order to gain personal victory. They pay a price in effort and dedication which others are not prepared to pay. This is admirable and wholesome.

It is the frantic desire to succeed that is dangerous to the mind. Usually this quality has its origin in certain incidents that occurred during childhood. Some are a part of the memory; others are buried deep in the subconscious.

Look at an example that helps us to understand both the conscious and the unconscious drives. The example involves the founder of a large religious group. John Wesley, as a child of six, was trapped on the second floor when fire swept his home in Epworth, England. The other members of the family escaped to safety. Only after flames had engulfed the house did they learn that John was missing. His cry was heard; then he appeared at the window of a second floor room. At the last possible moment he leaped to safety. For the rest of his life Wesley was influenced by what he felt was a miraculous escape from death. He referred to himself as "a brand plucked from the burning." In his conscious mind he was sure that he had been spared for a work only he could do. Certain psychologists have maintained that the incident also had an unconscious influence upon his life. His amazing strength to endure hardship, and his fortitude in the face of opposition were products of the unconscious influence of the fire.

In the case of John Wesley the drives of the conscious and unconscious childhood experience brought personal achievement as well as lasting benefits to humanity. But such drives sometimes have adverse influences on conduct. They lead us to strive desperately for social recognition or success. When this occurs it is often an indication of mental ill-health. Sometimes the evidence of personal ambition and effort inspires a certain amount of admiration from those who give homage to one who succeeds, but often it appears ridiculous and childish to family and friends.

We are wise if we note the line that marks the difference between worthy striving to use our abilities and the frantic desire to succeed. Usually the line can be clearly established when we examine the motives for our striving. If it is to help others, and to improve conditions in the community, it is almost always wholesome. If the striving is designed to gain recognition and material advantages for ourselves it must be assessed to learn whether it is accompanied by that hectic quality that is a mark of immaturity, or even of sickness.

The third quality is envy or jealousy. Envy is less serious than jealousy as a threat to mental health, but jealousy is always dangerous and destructive. When we are envious of the achievements of others we are tempted to rationalize

our failures. Jealousy blinds our eyes and our minds to truth. It keeps us from seeing situations in their true light. Both envy and jealousy have their source in pressing thoughts of personal inadequacy. Often the thoughts are erroneous and dangerous. They discourage right thinking and worthy efforts.

Consider whether you are victimized by either of these threats to health. If you are, then you need to check your thinking if you are to gain inner peace and happiness. Envy and jealousy are marks not only of childishness but of mental sickness.

The fourth quality that contributes to mental instability is hate. Hatred is an evidence of inadequacy. We hate that which may threaten our security or position. Hate is often paraded as a national virtue. Statesmen recognize hate as a sign of weakness and a source of potential danger, but lesser public figures stir the fires of hate as a means to further their selfish ends. They fear the application of reason to a problem. They thrive on self-righteousness, coupled with bitter denunciation of others.

The principle that applies on the national level is no less valid when it is applied to our personal problems. Hate is a sign of weakness. It is a confession of fear. Face the fact that hate of even one person is a threat to your mental health. You can dislike a person, and remain healthy, but you cannot hate without danger to your mind. Hate affects the physical body by fostering headaches, glandular disturbances, and digestive troubles.

These potentially dangerous attitudes are present to some extent in all of us. Do not be unduly disturbed if you dislike certain persons, even dislike them intensely. If you willingly admit your weaknesses, you will be in a position to do something about them. It is only when we are satisfied with our failures that our mental health is threatened.

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STEPS TO MENTAL HEALTH

It remains for us to examine the attitudes that contribute to mental stability. If you develop these qualities it is reasonable to assume that you will maintain mental balance, whatever the pressures may be that you face each day.

1. Endeavor to understand yourself - both your weaknesses and your evidences of strength. Socrates encouraged each of his students to "Know Thyself." This involves both your conscious and your unconscious self.

While some of our unconscious drives will always elude us, apart from a complete psychoanalysis, it is evident that the wise pilgrim can learn to understand and harness the inner drives of the unconscious. Make an earnest effort to discover why you act as you do. If you are overly aggressive in your social contacts then face the fact that you may be a victim of inferiority feelings. If you are timid and frightened when facing new situations, seek to learn whether you were overly sheltered in your childhood by loving but unwise parents. If you are jealous of the success of others then consider whether your particular talents

give you reason to believe you can expect to compete on an equal basis with the one against whom you direct the jealous feelings, or whether you are dwelling in a dream world.

It should be evident that self-examination can become obsessive if it is allowed to remain an end in itself. Yet mental health requires that we assess realistically both our possibilities and our limitations.

2. Face your weaknesses without excuse or apology. When you excuse yourself, or blame others for your mistakes and failures, you invite disaster. It is never a cause for shame when you fail if you have put forth your best efforts. The danger develops when you seek excuses. The mental strain becomes greater when you turn to persons or circumstances as a means to explain away your lack of achievement.

3. Give of yourself to help others, for to give is to live. Spengler's idea of "the survival of the fittest" was one cause of the mass sickness that infected Germany in Hitler's day. The concept was twisted to provide an excuse for the annihilation of those who were weak and helpless.

It is a basic principle of life that we respond naturally to the needs and suffering of others. Even animals help the wounded and sick in their company. Evidences of sympathy for the hurt and the needy - that is, a concern for others - is a quality that makes for mental stability and health. The absence of this quality, and with it an absorption with the self, invites mental strain and sickness.

The impulse to serve those in need is basic to the progress of humanity, but the rewards are no less personal. The penalty of neglect is a concern for the self that becomes a constant threat to mental wholeness.

4. Learn to tap the Divine Resources available to help those who are willing to accept them. These resources are a gift of Almighty God. Develop faith in Him as an antidote to fear. Practice the presence of God in your daily life.

The appropriation of Divine Power involves two factors. It requires first a knowledge of God's nature as One who is concerned and interested in His children. Second, it involves the personal expectancy that enables God to give us the means by which we can live triumphantly. The broadest avenue by which we can claim both these necessities that provide the power we need is prayer. Pray every day. Seek God in the first waking moments of the morning. Go to sleep at night with a prayer on your lips. And for your Special Needs send your written prayers to Headquarters to be placed on the Chapel Altar.

Our minds are less subject to the pressures of an unfriendly and hostile world when we learn how to accept and utilize a power beyond our own. By that process the Divine Mind works upon our thoughts and motives to provide an answer to our deepest needs.

In conclusion:

Mental Health is available to all who willingly travel the road that leads to wholeness. Whatever strain is imposed upon you by your work, your family

responsibilities, your personal health, or any other force, it is possible for you to maintain balance and perspective. The health you want to possess is earned at the price of awareness of need and the development of possibilities. Take an inventory of your personal assets and liabilities. Then dig deeply into the resources that contribute to mental health. The reward will be personal happiness and a clear and healthy mind.



AFFIRMATION

With an earnest desire to develop a healthy mind

I will -

- endeavor to understand myself
- recognize my weaknesses
- seek for pathways to power
- utilize the Divine Resources that promise to make life triumphant.

Blessings,

YOUR INSTRUCTOR.